



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

March 2, 2009

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Senate Bill 924 - An Act Concerning A Moratorium On State Funded Artificial Turf Athletic Fields And The Posting of Signs

The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 924.

This bill calls for:

- A moratorium on the installation of artificial turf fields funded with state money
- Posting warning signs on existing artificial turf fields.

This bill raises the following concerns:

1. **Connecticut state agencies are currently studying this issue.**
The CT DPH, DEP, UCONN Health Center and the CT Agriculture Experiment Station are currently conducting a study of the exposures, releases and potential health effects associated with such fields. Establishing a moratorium before this study is complete is premature and will send the wrong message to the public. Once a moratorium is in place, it could be difficult to lift regardless of the results of the study. The public could perceive the moratorium as a definitive conclusion that such fields are unsafe, regardless of what the study finds. Confusion is created and confidence is lost if official positions are reversed.
2. **Preliminary review of data by CT DPH shows little evidence of public health risk.**
Based upon the limited data currently available, DPH has conducted an extensive review of the chemical exposures and health risks possible from crumb rubber-based artificial turf fields. This review concluded that there was little evidence of immediate or significant health hazards. This same conclusion has been arrived at by other states that have looked at the question and by a number of European countries. Rubber is common in the human environment from sources such as road dust, certain types of flooring, and at playgrounds. While it is important that we are investigating how much artificial turf fields adds to this background exposure, one should realize that exposure to rubber-related chemicals is commonplace.
3. **At least four other government agencies are currently conducting studies on this issue.**
Reports from New York City, New Jersey, New York State and the US EPA will be published soon, most likely before this summer. Any moratorium decision at this time would be premature and not have the benefit of their conclusions.
4. **Posting warning signs at existing fields would cause undo alarm at fields in Connecticut that have been in use for many years.**
DPH is not aware of any specific health warning that should be placed on such signs. The bill states that each sign should indicate that "toxins" are contained in the rubber. This statement is misleading as it is the amount of exposure to the rubber chemicals that dictates the level of concern, not their mere presence. Both the presence and levels of exposure are being studied in Connecticut and the other city, state and federal studies mentioned above.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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